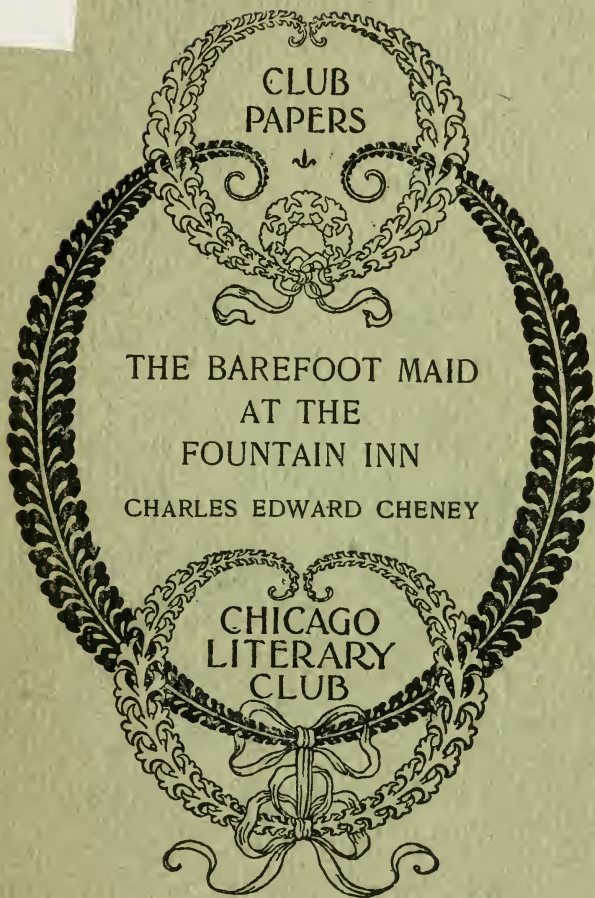


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The Barefoot Maid at
the Fountain Inn



The Barefoot Maid at the Fountain Inn

By
Charles Edward Cheney

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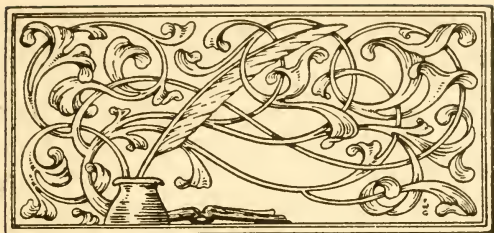
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THE BAREFOOT MAID AT THE FOUNTAIN INN

I



HE rugged coast of New England has few points more picturesque than where the historic town of Marblehead looks out on its landlocked bay. As Pompeii and Herculaneum, unearthed by modern excavation, recall vividly what Roman cities were when Nero sat upon the imperial throne, so Marblehead restores to the Twentieth Century much of the appearance it wore two hundred and fifty years ago. Now, as then, one seeks in vain a level area amidst the jumbled mass of gray rocks forming the site on which the town is built. The strata are tilted on edge and twisted into weird convolutions by some primeval cataclysm.

To-day, as in colonial times, the wooden buildings bid such defiance to all orderly and systematic planning of their location that a stranger might fancy them to have been sown broadcast, as the old-time farmer scattered the seed of a future harvest. Here a quaint cottage may nestle in the lee of a beetling cliff, while another like structure faces from the summit the fierce winds from off the sea. As in the Eighteenth Century, the narrow paths which serve as streets make their sinuous way in and out among the houses—a perpetual suggestion that the dwellings were built to escape human approach, and that the roads had later set out to find them.

But if, like an Egyptian sepulchre, the Marblehead of to-day has kept embalmed the town which our Puritan forefathers knew, there are some features of its present life in strange contrast to what it was when its citizens were loyal subjects of the second King George of England.

In our day, inside the long and rocky promontory which divides the waters of the harbor from the rude pulsings of the Atlantic, each summer sees a congregating of tiny sea-craft from every American port, while even Europe sends its fleet-winged yachts to struggle for supremacy in the annual regatta.

A lonely expanse was the bay of Marble-

head in the early colonial times. Then its surface was furrowed only by the keels of the fishing-boats which gave a livelihood to its hardy population, while at long intervals some venturesome vessel from London or Bristol cast anchor in its quiet waters.

In this generation wealth, fashion, and luxury hold high carnival through the summer months in the brilliant halls and broad verandas of great hotels, conspicuous among the simple dwellings of the ancient town. But in the old times a single hostelry sufficed for public entertainment. The Fountain Inn was perched upon one of the rocky hillocks which command a view of the open sea. Close by was an old and deep-dug well of purest water, which gave to the tavern the striking name it bore. Choked up and covered over for perhaps a hundred years, its recent discovery and reopening have served to identify the site of the famous inn which long ago crumbled into ruin, but lives imperishable in the historic traditions of the place.

Here the chance traveler of those days found a hospitable welcome and such fare and lodging as had made the name of mine host, Nathaniel Bartlett, known to the far corners of the Commonwealth. Here, too, of an evening, when the storm beat on the many-paned windows, and the booming of the surf was like the explosion of great

guns, the fishermen sat before the roaring fire, drank their brown ale, sang their songs, and told their weird tales of dories lost in the fogs off George's Banks, and of fishing-schooners that sailed out of the portals of the bay, but which no man ever saw again.

II

One summer afternoon, in the year of grace 1742, the cheery landlord of the Fountain Inn bustled to the entrance of his hostelry to welcome such a guest as never before had crossed its threshold. His advent had been announced by the rumble on the rocky road of a great coach with armorial bearings on its panels, drawn by four sleek horses, and attended by liveried flunkies. Little wonder that when the cumbersome vehicle halted before the door, and a footman, leaping from his perch, let down the folding steps for his master to alight, the astonished Boniface, cap in hand, louted low before such unaccustomed splendor. Still more must the landlord have been overwhelmed with reverential awe when he discovered that his unexpected visitor was none less than Charles Henry Frankland, Esquire, Collector of the port of Boston, and next in dignity, as a representative of the crown, to Sir William Shirley, Governor of the Province of Massachusetts. If histori-

ans are to be believed, even thus early the smoldering sparks of Democracy had begun to kindle in the bosom of New England. But the fierce conflagration of the Revolution was yet far down the future, and with the fisher-folk of Marblehead blue blood counted for much, and those in whose veins it flowed commanded an almost obsequious respect. Charles Henry Frankland bore one of the great family names of the Mother Country. Almost from the days of the Norman Conquest his forebears had been lords of the manor of Thirsk, with their seat at Great Thirkleby Hall, in the North Riding of Yorkshire. The youngest daughter of Oliver Cromwell, the favorite of her illustrious father, and a woman of such rare charm that, according to Carlyle, Charles the Second offered to make her his consort, was Frankland's great-grandmother. Yet despite the alliance with the line of the great Lord Protector, the Franklands were loyal to the Stuart dynasty, and, at the Restoration, in 1660, the head of the family was rewarded by a baronetcy, and became Sir William Frankland of Thirsk. Doubtless it added to the dignity of the Collector of the port of Boston, when, in 1754, his younger sister became the wife of Thomas Pelham, Earl of Chichester.

It is not difficult to discover from the annals of the period that of all the aristo-

cratic society which reflected in the colonial capital of New England something of the glitter and stateliness of the court of St. James, Charles Henry Frankland shone in peerless pre-eminence. An education becoming his rank, and a fortune which was ample, had cultivated a mind of no ordinary acuteness to a degree which gave a scholarly tinge to his character. What we call natural science was then in the infancy of its development. But Frankland's acquaintance with botany, gardening, and scientific agriculture was far beyond that of his contemporaries. Well grounded in the Latin classics, he spoke French with the ease and elegance of "one to the manner born." We have the testimony of those who were his companions and intimates that an almost undefinable grace of manner charmed all who came within the circle of his acquaintance. Refinement and gentle breeding were manifest in his conversation and, in contrariety to the habit of men of his class in that age, he treated with equal courtesy of address the humblest yeoman and the proudest official. In his diary he gives expression to this trend of mind, when he makes the following entry: "I cannot suffer a man of low condition to excel me in manners." Two portraits of Frankland are still extant—one in this country and another in England—both bearing witness to the

manly beauty superadded to his intellect and accomplishments. As one of his biographers has said: "He had a refined and noble cast of features, with a peculiarly pensive and melancholy expression. His face bears witness to a certain sweetness of temper and delicacy of taste."

Such was the visitor whose advent overwhelmed the landlord of the Fountain Inn on that summer day of 1742. It would be interesting to permit imagination to color the scanty facts which history has handed down. We can fancy the hurried preparations to give fitting entertainment to a guest so manifestly in startling contrast to the rude fishermen and sailors who were the ordinary patrons of the ancient inn. We can see the portly host as he himself shows the newly-arrived dignitary to the best chamber which his house affords. We can hear his orders to the hurrying servants, and his apologies to his guest for humble accommodations and rustic fare. The bare outlines of the incident have been filled in with entrancing lights and shadows in a modern novel, and also in a charming poem by Doctor Oliver Wendell Holmes. That which concerns this essay is to relate only what actually occurred. Certain it is that, as Frankland was descending the staircase of the Fountain Inn, his attention was attracted to a young servant-maid of perhaps sixteen

years, who on her knees was vigorously scrubbing the floor. Clad in coarse homespun, much the worse for wear, but scrupulously clean, her poverty was emphasized by the conspicuous absence of shoes and stockings. But, as she looked up at the sound of footsteps, and rose respectfully to make room for the gentleman to pass, there burst upon Frankland's sight a vision of dazzling beauty. It may be that in maturer life some great painter, like Sir Joshua Reynolds, tried to portray the charm of her womanhood; but there is no authentic likeness in existence of the barefoot maid at the Fountain Inn. Nevertheless, with one consent, the writers who have handed the story down, bear witness to a loveliness such as Frankland had never seen at the court of King George, or among the stately dames and blushing damsels of the colonial aristocracy. One author says: "Her ringlets were black and glossy as the raven; her dark eyes beamed with light; her voice was musical, and she bore the charming name of Agnes Surriage." Perhaps no attempt to picture her face and form can rival that of Doctor Holmes:

"She turned—a reddening rose in bud,
Its calyx half withdrawn—
Her cheek on fire with damasked blood
Of girlhood's glowing dawn."

There can be no doubt that Frankland was

amazed at the vision of such charms in so unlikely a place. The scene, however, which followed was singularly commonplace and unromantic.

Frankland asked the child about her parents, and, learning that she was the fourth of the seven children of Edward Surriage, a fisherman of Marblehead, whose poverty had compelled his young daughter to earn her bread as "maid of all work" at the Fountain Inn—the pitying gentleman handed her five shillings, and bade her buy herself a pair of shoes.

Despite the prosaic quality of this interview, its memory did not fade from the mind of Frankland. The face of the girl must have haunted his thoughts, for only a few months later we find him again visiting Marblehead. If he needed excuse for return to the spot where he was drawn as by a loadstone in the autumn following, it was easy to find it in the line of official duty. Some years earlier Marblehead had become a port of entry, and its revenue probably passed through the hands of the Boston Collector. In that very year, 1742, the General Court had made a grant of six hundred and ninety pounds for the protection of Marblehead from French cruisers. The ancient stone bastions, regarded then as proof against the artillery of that period, had just begun to frown upon the harbor, on

the site where to-day the Stars and Stripes float over the ramparts of Fort Sewall. It is no unreasonable conjecture that Sir William Shirley may have designated his next in authority in the colony of Massachusetts Bay to inspect the rising fortification, and to report upon the progress of the work. Perhaps Frankland welcomed his commission with a secret joy which he did not himself altogether understand. For the Fountain Inn was in close proximity to the rocky plateau chosen as the location of the colonial stronghold.

Be that as it may, it requires no stretch of the imagination to believe that Frankland lost no time in learning whether Agnes Surriage was still scrubbing the floors of the Fountain Inn. The scene when he again found the girl engaged in her menial labor has been picturesquely delineated by his biographers. As he entered the tavern, he found the object of his inquiry as indescribably beautiful as a few weeks before. Her homespun dress could not detract from the exquisite symmetry of her figure. Her face was radiant with pleasure at the recognition of the remembered guest, and her low courtesy spoke as plainly of a modest self-respect as of honor for one of such widely different station from herself. If her speech was disfigured by the strange dialect which then marked the native of

Marblehead as unmistakably as to-day the abuse of the letter "h" betrays the cockney, it could not wholly conceal the rare sweetness of a voice which in after years was celebrated for the music of its tones. Suddenly the visitor saw that, with all her undeniable loveliness, the girl was still bare-foot. With an expression of disappointment, he said: "So you did not buy the shoes which I asked you get." "Oh, yes, sir," was the *naïve* reply, "but I wear them only to meeting."

III

Let us follow Frankland, as, later in that October afternoon, he makes his way along the rocky path leading to the Surriage home. The lowly dwelling was, doubtless, in the quarter of Marblehead little frequented by any save the poor. Here and there were scattered the cottages of the less successful fishermen, behind which rose the "flakes," or fish-fences for the drying of the catch. Why Edward and Mary Surriage were in such humble environment—and what vicissitudes of the struggle with barren soil and pitiless sea had brought them to such penury—it would be fruitless to inquire. But the genealogical revival, marking the last fifty years, has brought to light that Dame Mary Surriage was one of the descendants and heirs of the famous John Brown, who,

soon after the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, purchased of the Indians a vast tract covering four modern townships in the Penobscot Valley. There is reason to believe that she had been reared in comparative comfort; and, even in the depth of poverty, had retained something of the gentlewoman's breeding. The records of the ancient Puritan church at Marblehead bear witness to the piety of both the parents of Agnes Surriage. However destitute the humble dwelling of even such graces as adorned the homes of their neighbors, their roof sheltered a brood of children reared in the fear of God and in the daily practice of the virtues of religion. Before hard necessity had driven Agnes to the service of the landlord of the Fountain Inn, she had been a favorite pupil of the pastor of the Second parish of Marblehead. It is no fanciful conjecture that a girl, inheriting intellect and refinement from an ancestry of distinction in the annals of New England, should, like our western plains under the touch of irrigation, develop a latent fertility of mind under the tuition of such a teacher as the Reverend Edward Holyoke, afterward the celebrated President of Harvard College.

As Edward Surriage sat before his driftwood fire, drying his garments after the day's hard toil at sea, a knock at his door woke him from his reverie. Crossing the

puncheon floor, he lifted the heavy wooden latch, to find himself face to face with one whose dress and bearing proclaimed unmistakably that he belonged to a class far different from the plain fisherfolk of the town.

There has come down to us no authentic record of the conversation which followed. Only this is certain: Frankland must have set before the parents of Agnes the injustice of allowing such a maiden as their daughter to grow to womanhood in the menial occupations and the coarse environment of a common tavern. We can fancy the eloquence with which he pleaded for the development of such a mind and character by a better education. It was a sin to permit such a flower to "waste its sweetness on the desert air" of a village like Marblehead. And if—as we may readily imagine—an honest pride gave way before the glowing picture of the possible future of their child, and they confessed that only their abject poverty compelled them to sacrifice hopes which her loveliness and talent had inspired in them—Frankland was prompt to suggest a way of escape from the obstacles in the path of the realization of their dreams. So profound was the interest which Agnes had awakened in his mind, that he would gladly bear every cost involved in the intellectual and social cultivation of a girl of such extraordinary

promise. There is no reason whatever to suppose that in this offer Frankland was not absolutely sincere, or that any dishonorable purpose lurked like a serpent under his generous proposal. There is little likelihood that the courtly and scholarly man of the world had fallen in love with a scullion in the kitchen of a Marblehead inn—however unusual her beauty and the amiability of her nature. Moreover, it is evident that through the four years following the consent of the Surriage household to the education of Agnes, although Frankland must have seen her almost daily—no breath of gossip ever clouded the purity of the relation between the benefactor and his *protégéé*. Some of the writers who have handed down this romantic story of colonial days assert positively that Frankland placed his beautiful ward under the matronly supervision and chaperonage of Lady Frances, the charming wife of Sir William Shirley, the Governor of Massachusetts. The warm friendship which is known to have bound the young Collector of the port of Boston to the Governor and his lady, gives probability to the tradition.

In Leverett Lane, near King Street, in Boston, one Peter Pelham at this time conducted a school patronized by the wealthy and aristocratic families of the New England capital. It was here that the young girl

began her career as a pupil. But Frankland's well-filled purse was ever open to provide Agnes with additional instructors in every branch of learning which could expand her budding intellect and develop her social graces. She was taught not only the common elements of mental culture, but music, dancing, embroidery, and the various accomplishments befitting a young woman of wealth and rank. How well and how rapidly she responded to these advantages rests upon undoubted witness. The singular mixture which she displayed of artless simplicity and elegant refinement crowned her personal loveliness and intelligence with an irresistible charm. The stately and dignified society of Boston received her as became one chaperoned by Lady Shirley. Her dazzling beauty made her the envy of the younger women; yet her unselfishness disarmed the critic, and changed jealous rivalry into admiring love.

Four years of growth, for which Frankland was responsible, had transformed the barefoot serving-maid of the Fountain Inn into a being whose loveliness made life without her "not worth the living." It is clear that at first he decided to defy the social conventions of his Boston friends by honorable marriage. But what of his kindred and old comrades across the sea? He was intimate with the Earl of Chesterfield, whose perfec-

tion of manners he was said to have acquired. Horace Walpole was his personal and political friend. What would be the comments of these cynical gentlemen, when across the Atlantic there floated the incredible tale that Charles Henry Frankland—the cultivated, refined and accomplished heir of a splendid name—had taken as his wife “a maid of all work” in a New England inn? Or, could he without a shudder contemplate the agony of his patrician mother, and the horror of the Countess of Chichester, his sister, when their pride should be humbled by the tidings of such a *mésalliance*?

IV

There is no hallucination more mischievous and blinding to the moral sense than the notion that genius should condone wrongdoing. Yet most of us are prone to permit the glamour of a great name in literature or science, in arms or statesmanship, to distort the judgement till sin looks like righteousness through the smoke that rises from the burning incense of hero-worship.

King George’s collector of the port of Boston was not of heroic build. But his rank, his education, and the personal charm which made him socially irresistible have conspired to bias the views of the writers who have told the story of Frankland and

Agnes Surriage. Somehow, the reader of the tale gets a vision of prismatic colors, till he forgets that the medium through which they come has refracted the rays of rectitude and truth. For, after all, the social superiority of the man, the unusual opportunities which he had enjoyed, and his undoubted intellectual brilliancy really ought to aggravate rather than minimize the wretched wrong which he committed. He betrayed a sacred trust to which he had pledged his honor, when the parents of the girl gave her education into his keeping.

No doubt a righteous judgement involves also the condemnation of Agnes. But it is to be remembered that the circumstances of her life had led her to look up to Frankland with something of an Oriental idolatry. He had found her a poor, barefoot menial, engaged in the lowest services, with no thought of any uplifting above the station to which she has been born. Out of a boundless generosity he had opened to her the door into a new life. Not a want of hers which he had not anticipated and supplied. Through four years he had spared nothing which could minister to her comfort, cultivate her intellect, and polish her manners. He had, as she felt, transformed through his alchemy a bit of base metal into shining gold. In her eyes he was a king, and "the king can do no wrong." He was

a god, and at his shrine she bowed in prostrate adoration. So crept the serpent into Eden.

V

Samson's foxes with firebrands fastened to their tails were no quicker to set in flame the ripe wheat-fields of the Philistines than were the fiery tongues of scandal to spread the burning wrath of aristocratic Boston. True, the standard of morals had previously sagged low, through the vicious example of some of the officials of the crown, but after all, the bone and the sinew of the colonial town, the wealthy merchants, the scholarly citizens that Harvard College had been training for a hundred years, and that substantial element of the population in whom the influence of Puritan principles still survived—were ablaze with horror and indignation as the story sped upon it way.

As if to add to the conspicuity of the principal offender, just at this critical moment came the news from England of the death of an uncle—Sir Thomas Frankland, one of the Lords of the Admiralty. The baronetcy of Thirsk had fallen to the nephew in America, as the nearest of kin; and henceforth he was to be known as Sir Charles Henry Frankland, baronet. But inherited title and large estates were of no avail to restore the good opinion which he had reck-

lessly flung away. Society felt itself outraged; and when Agnes Surriage came to preside over his domestic establishment, his neighbors curtly declined invitations which once they would have been proud to accept, and the doors of the great mansions of Beacon Street were shut in Frankland's face.

Not infrequently the voice of conscience may be silenced by absorption in some new and fascinating occupation. Sometimes, too, when a man is cut to the quick by insults evoked by his own conduct, he may contemptuously turn his back upon his critics and his enemies. Probably, it was something of this sort which led Frankland to exchange his social ostracism in Boston for the enjoyments of country life.

Twenty-five miles southwest of the colonial capital, in the heart of a heavily wooded district, was the town of Hopkinton. Incorporated in 1715, it was still an insignificant village; but its romantic situation, the fertility of the soil, and the springs of pure water gushing from the surrounding hills combined to make it an unusually attractive site for a country estate such as Frankland had been familiar with in his native England. On the borders of the little town he purchased a tract of five hundred acres. One who visited the place some years ago draws a glowing picture of its beauty. He

says: "Frankland's property was on the western slope of a noble eminence called in the Indian tongue Magunco, 'the place of great trees.' Here, in earlier times, John Eliot had gathered an Indian congregation and built a rude place of worship. The summit of the hill commands a view of Wachusett and Monadnock toward the northwest; of a rich and varied landscape to the south, and on the east of the charming village of Ashland, where the Concord river and the Cold Springs blend their waters."

Here Frankland laid out a princely domain, and erected a stately manor-house which reflected his memories of the country homes of the English aristocracy. Through the chestnut forest, which formed a noble park, a broad avenue wound its way to the entrance of the mansion. The slope of Magunco afforded opportunity for terraces blooming with native and imported flowers; while the grounds immediately surrounding the dwelling were planted with rare shrubs, and shaded with great elms. In 1858 the house was destroyed by fire; but the foundation-stones of the costly building linger still. A friend of the writer of this paper—a cultivated New England woman—recalls from the days of her childhood frequent visits to the historic place. The salient features of the great estate were then easily identified, and the noble mansion, soon to

be swept away by remorseless flames, revealed something of its original majesty in the Corinthian pillars of the wide and lofty hall, and in the tattered tapestry which clung to the mouldering walls.

Even to this day elms of Frankland's planting tower above the lawn; the outline of the box hedges of the gardens can be traced, and pear and apple trees, venerable with moss, survive the decay of a hundred and sixty years.

There is little except local tradition to enable us to picture the life which Frankland led in the rural retreat which his taste and wealth had called into being. Perhaps it is as well that no authentic information can be obtained. For the glimpses which we get of this period of his career only make it evident that close upon the betrayal of his sacred trust had followed a lowering of ethical standards, and a weakening of moral fibre. Stories have been handed down of bacchanalian feasts, at which the guests were men and women of a sadly different type from Frankland's former associates. We hear of costly wines flowing like water; of boon companions ending a night's banquet in stupid drunkenness or brutal quarrels; and of the lord of the manor drowning the ever-present voice of conscience in revelry with those whom his own refinement would once have led him to despise.

It requires no vivid imagination to picture the wretchedness of the hapless woman, who knew that this degradation of a noble life had begun in a guilty love for her. Added to the pangs of remorse for her own lost purity was the agony of witnessing the gradual but steady crumbling of the foundations of character in one whom she still loved with a passionate devotion.

Ancient records are extant which show that Frankland's country life did not prevent his attention to his duties as Collector of the port of Boston. But in 1754 a lawsuit involving his heirship to the Manor of Thirsk in Yorkshire demanded his return to his native country. With him went the unhappy Agnes. It seems that Frankland hoped that his own persuasions, reinforced by the rare loveliness, the charm of manner, and the mental cultivation of Agnes, would prevail to secure her recognition by his kinsfolk in England. But in this—as might have been expected—he was doomed to bitter disappointment. His haughty mother and his sister, the Countess of Chichester, alike refused an interview with the woman who might be Frankland's wife in fact, but not in the eyes of the law, nor with the sanction of the church.

Then, as never before, must have burst upon Agnes the terrible revelation of her false position. Wherever she turned her

steps, on either side of the Atlantic, the women with whom her native gifts and trained intellect entitled her to mingle on equal terms shunned the possibility of her leprous touch. She was an outcast, as completely beyond the pale of social recognition as if the "scarlet letter" of the old Puritan tradition had been branded on her bosom. As her memory retraced the pathway she had traveled, there must have sprung up within her heart a longing—now impossible of realization—that she were once more the barefooted, but innocent, maid of the Fountain Inn, at Marblehead.

Embittered by his rejection on the part of his relatives, and conscious that he was only tolerated by his former friends in public life, Frankland turned his face toward the continent of Europe. At that period of history Portugal was in effect a dependency of the British Empire. While a golden stream of wealth still flowed into her coffers from her South American possessions, and luxury and extravagance were fostered by riches gained without labor, the Portuguese monarchy, ever threatened with Spanish conquest, would have tottered to its fall, but for the strong support of English diplomacy, backed by English bayonets. Lisbon had become the most dissolute of the European capitals. Its beauty and splendor, its delightful climate and gay society had

attracted to it the idle rich from many lands, but especially from England. Toward the English colony in this pleasure-loving capital Frankland gravitated by a natural force. For predominant among these expatriated Britons was a class who, like himself, had either lost caste at home or could not brook the moral restraints of Anglo-Saxon civilization and religion. The social qualities of Frankland, his fascinating manners, and his newly-inherited wealth and title soon made him foremost in the dissipations which engrossed this company of voluntary exiles. One of his biographers hints that, although in Boston he had maintained at least a semblance of conformity to the Church of England, he now adopted the skeptical opinions of Bolingbroke and La Rochefoucauld, and, like hundreds of others, before and since his day, found a convenient hiding-place from the pursuit of Conscience in the fog-banks of Unbelief.

VI

It was the first day of November, 1755. That morning the sun had risen in unclouded splendor. As its rays fell upon the palaces and spires of the city, and sparkled on the mimic waves of the Tagus, Lisbon, always beautiful, seemed to have acquired a new loveliness. The balmy and soft air temperature made the autumn

day like one borrowed from the early summer.

With the dawn the population from the homes of the rich and poor alike poured into the streets and squares, and packed to the doors every one of Lisbon's seventy churches. From the vast spaces of the Cathedral to the narrow aisles of the humbler chapels where mass was said, every place of worship was thronged to suffocation. For this was All-Saints Day, when, as in all Roman Catholic countries, solemn commemoration of the dead goes hand-in-hand with holiday festivities.

In the cool of the morning Frankland, accompanied by a lady of the English colony, whose name has not been preserved to us, had driven out to witness the varied scenes which the streets presented, or to enjoy the breezes from the broad bosom of the Tagus. The Cathedral clock had just tolled the hour of ten, when, though the heavens were still without a cloud, there burst upon astonished Lisbon a long roll of deafening thunder, not from the blue dome above, but from the depths of earth beneath. With no other warning, the surface of the ground heaved in vast billows like the swelling of the ocean tides. As if some subterranean giant, such as the old mythologies fancied to be buried under Aetna, were struggling to stand erect, the foundation-stones of the

stateliest buildings were lifted from their ancient places. Structures which were of yesterday and those hoary with the history of ages alike toppled into indiscriminate desolation. Down came the roofs and walls of the crowded churches, crushing out the lives of the trapped worshipers within. In three minutes thirty thousand souls had perished. But the first fearful shock was followed by others, each adding its quota to the death-roll of Nature's desperate battle, until sixty thousand of Lisbon's population lay buried in its ruins. Those who survived the cataclysm long recalled the nightmare horror of groans and shrieks for help which made the day one of hideous memories.

Suddenly a cry rang through the ruined city: "To the quay!" The thousands who had escaped from the falling buildings choked the streets which led in the direction of the harbor. There a beautiful and massive quay, built of white marble, had recently been erected at a vast cost to the nation. As yet it stood unmoved. But hardly had the multitude taken refuge on its broad platform than there came a fearful sequence to the convulsion of the earth. At Lisbon the Tagus is a full mile in breadth. From shore to shore the waters receded toward the Atlantic, leaving the bar exposed to view. How many minutes

elapsed has never been recorded—but as the luckless fugitives looked seaward they saw a mighty wall of water, fifty feet in height, rolling in to engulf them. Caught in its remorseless grip, ships of every size and build were swept upon the shore. Beneath the quay there opened an abyss; and, when the tidal-wave again retired, the marble quay, the refugees who had sought its shelter, and the shattered vessels—all had disappeared.

VII

But what of those with whom this essay is the more immediately concerned?

We can picture Frankland and his companion, as, in the full enjoyment of the sweet morning air, the delicious sunshine, and the brilliant coloring of the motley throng through which they drove, they chatted as gaily as the volatile Lisbonese themselves.

Just where a narrow street was cast into shadow by the stately mansion of a Portuguese noble, Dom Francesco da Ribeiro, their conversation suddenly was checked by a deep rumbling out of the earth beneath them. A moment more, and the huge structure, past which lay their road, toppled from its base. The avalanche of stone buried the horses, the carriage and its occupants. The only recollection of that terrible mo-

ment which Frankland could recall in after years was that the woman beside him, in her death-agonies, set her teeth in his arm, piercing the sleeve, and tearing the flesh within. To his dying hour he kept the embroidered and laced coat that bore such fearful witness to the tragedy, and once in each after year, with that memorial before his eyes, he kept a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer.

But we anticipate. Crushed by an overwhelming weight, and helpless to move hand or foot, Frankland did not wholly lose consciousness. What thoughts crowded upon his mind; what agonies of remorse, and what yearnings to undo the wrong he had wreaked upon a trustful girl—we only know from the effects upon his later life. He never told them in words. They have no record in his diary which is still preserved in the archives of the Historical Society of Massachusetts.

But where, meantime, was the unhappy Agnes? Startled by the premonitions of the coming cataclysm, and anticipating its horrors, her one absorbing thought was not for her own life, but for that of the man she loved. Before her own dwelling had gone down in the general ruin, her woman's wit foresaw that gold would be the only power prevailing upon the terror-stricken throng to aid her in her search for Frankland. So

she had gathered up, and hidden upon her person, all the money which the house contained. Then she rushed out, in total ignorance of the way that Frankland had taken, to find her path blocked everywhere by the ruins, her own safety in constant peril from falling walls, and to be jostled and cursed by those whose fright made them utterly indifferent to the needs of any but themselves.

Through the stopped-up ways, which half an hour before had been streets lined with splendid houses, she wandered distracted with fear, yet with every faculty alert. An hour—two hours—had passed in fruitless search, when, as she tried to climb a huge hillock of the *débris*, her quick ear caught the pitiful groaning of a voice she knew. In a moment she had flung herself upon the heap of ruins, and thrown the whole force of her vigorous arms into the effort to lift the mass of stone and timber pinning down Frankland by its weight. In vain she strained her muscles, and bruised her soft hands. Something more than a woman's strength was needed if Frankland was to be saved. In desperation she appealed to the hurrying crowd, brutalized by sheer terror. As well have cried to the stones that were crushing out his life! Even then hope did not die in that brave heart. A group of sailors from one of the wrecked ships came stumbling

over the mound in which her beloved lay. Quick as thought, she spread out before their hungry eyes her hands filled with glittering gold-coins. The bait was too tempting to be ignored, even in such an hour. The brawny seamen laid hold upon the beams and blocks of stone, and struggled with them, as if around the capstan they were heaving an anchor from the depths. Slowly but surely their hands tore away the covering of that living grave, and Frankland lay revealed to the eyes of the woman whose love had saved him from certain and horrible death.

Fast upon the heels of the earthquake followed pursuing flames. Uncounted thousands of candles, blazing on the altars of the churches, had set on fire all that was combustible in the ruined city. Somehow—and with no loss of time—they must flee from the conflagration already upon their track. Again Agnes plied successfully the lever which wealth placed in her hands. The desperately injured and half-conscious Frankland was carried on an extemporized litter to a temporary refuge. One account makes his place of shelter to have been a house spared by the convulsion, at Belem, where the Tagus flows into the sea. Another narrative relates that, from the hills above Lisbon, Frankland and Agnes watched the devouring flames which for

three days ate into the ruins of the most beautiful capital of Europe.

VIII

To those whose summer days are spent upon the rugged coast where the cliffs of New England fling back the surges of the sea there is a pivotal moment which we call "the turning of the tide." It is the instant when the hand of the God of Nature reverses the outward flow of the mighty waters, and bids them take their shoreward way. From that instant begins the strange movement which, pulsing through tidal-bay and tributary creek, buries out of sight the slime and ugly deposits which the ebb had exposed to view. But only for twelve short hours. Not so the "turn of the tide" in the life and character of Charles Henry Frankland. It was "once for all." In that crisis of his history, when he lay like a buried corpse beneath the fallen walls, he had come face to face with God and eternity. Call it a moral revolution or a spiritual conversion, in either case it was a *lasting* transformation. "By their fruits ye shall know them." He was impatient of delay in making such reparation as was in his power for the wrong which awakened Conscience could no longer tolerate. Somewhere in the suburbs of Lisbon was found a priest of the

Church of Rome ; and, while the earth had not yet ceased to tremble, and the smoke of the burning town still hovered over its ruins, Frankland and Agnes were joined in lawful marriage.

But beneath their eyes was the desolation of Lisbon. Every memory which the sight aroused was freighted with regrets. Little wonder that few weeks elapsed before the good ship *Swithington*, with favoring winds, was bearing them swiftly toward Frankland's native land. It was an English vessel, and on board was a clergyman of the English Church. Little as either Frankland or Agnes had hitherto exhibited of the spirit of religion, both were nominally of the Protestant faith. So, lest any possible question should arise to cast doubt upon the validity of their marriage, a second ceremony was performed in the solemn ritual of the Anglican communion, and with the officers of the ship as witnesses.

It is highly probable that the story of Frankland's deliverance from a horrible death, of the heroic devotion of Agnes, and of their marriage under such strange circumstances, had preceded their arrival in England. For, certain it is that when at the ancestral home of the family at *Mattersea*, in *Nottinghamshire*, Frankland led Agnes to meet his proud mother, the matron opened her arms in welcome to a beloved

daughter, and the Countess of Chichester wept tears of gratitude as she embraced the woman who had saved her brother's life.

IX

It would be interesting to trace this romance of veritable history down to its end. It would lead us where Agnes, Lady Frankland, became the admiration of the courtly circle in which shone such brilliant names as Walpole, Pitt, Pelham, and Chesterfield. We should follow her and her husband again and again across the sea. We should pass from one stately room to another of the house in Garden Court Street, which the ancient chronicles of Boston picture as the noblest mansion in America. In her country-seat at Hopkinton we should mingle with the guests who paid their court to a hostess unrivaled in her gracious hospitality. We should see the fisherman's daughter of Marblehead, and barefoot maid of the Fountain Inn, as, with dignity softened by native wit and grace of manner behind which was gentleness of heart, she charmed the refined and cultivated society of the city which once had cast her out.

We should learn that, with all the selfish narrowness which wealth and social rank sometimes engender, this was a woman not ashamed to "look unto the rock from which

she was hewed, and the hole of the pit whence she was digged." For we should find her providing for every member of her humble kindred, welcoming her fisherman brother to her splendid home, sharing its luxury with a poverty-stricken sister, and sparing no money or time to educate that sister's children. We should witness the effort to undo the evil her one great sin had wrought, and to atone for what, though forgiven, could never be forgotten—as she moved a ministering spirit where sin and suffering found hope, comfort, and cheer in her gentle presence and loving words of sympathy. And, could we follow still farther the stream of these two lives, as they flowed calmly on together, we should see that which, though far from rare, is one of the elements which make life "worth living"—the unselfish devotion of a true woman to her husband.


X

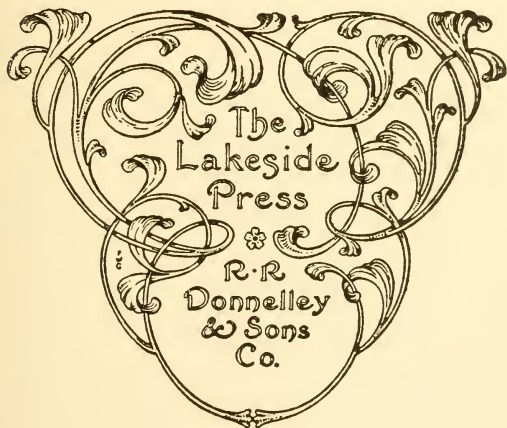
High up on the wall of Ireston Church, near Bath, in England, the curious visitor, with difficulty, deciphers the epitaph in memory of "Sir Charles Henry Frankland, of Thirkleby, in the County of York, Baronet." Its closing words read, "This monument is erected by his loving widow, Agnes, Lady Frankland."

Her own tomb is in the burial-ground of St. Pancras Church, in Chichester.

XI

From the pages of Ovid some of us may recall the story of Pygmalion, king of Cyprus. A royal sculptor, out of purest ivory he carved a statue so rarely beautiful that he fell in love with the work of his own hands. Among the grim rocks of Marblehead and in prosaic Boston, New England reproduces the charming myth. Frankland's keen perception saw purest ivory in the white soul of the barefoot maid of the Fountain Inn. His kindly interest wrought out of that material an image of transcendent grace—only to kindle in his own soul a passionate love for the product of his generosity. We may not blind our eyes to the wrong which that love wreaked. But we can acknowledge the repentance and the reparation—even though they had their birth in what our Puritan forefathers called “an act of God.”

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